

June 26, 2003

HOUSING AUTHORITY OF THE COUNTY OF CLALLAM
AWARDED GRANT

Port Angeles---USDA Rural Development will present the Housing Authority of the County of Clallam with a check in the amount of \$10,000 on Monday, June 30, 2003. The funds will bring the organization one step closer to implementing a self-help housing program in the county.

The grant funds will be used to develop an application for a two-year program, allowing the Housing Authority to provide technical assistance. The two-year grant proposes to provide assistance to 20 households, who will build their homes through the Mutual Self-Help Housing Program. The program provides a unique homeownership opportunity for households earning less than 80% of median income, who would not typically qualify for a conventional mortgage. Eligible applicants receive financing through USDA Rural Development and cooperatively build their homes with assistance provided by the Housing Authority of the County of Clallam (HACC).

The owner-builder households – many of whom have no construction experience – will work together and share in the construction of each other's homes under the direction of an experienced construction supervisor employed by HACC. The houses will be modest in size and cost, yet of high quality and design. Participants obtain financing, and work at least 30 hours each week, providing at least 65% of the construction work on the project. Under the mutual construction concept, all homes are fully completed, before any family moves in.

USDA Rural Development provides Section 502 Direct loans to the owner-builders and 523 Technical Assistance Grants to organizations, such as HACC to oversee the program. "It's the American Dream to own your own home and it's great to play a part in helping these owner-builders achieve this dream," said State Director Jackie J. Gleason.

HACC has proposed a start date of September to begin operating the Mutual Self-Help Program and provide technical assistance to owner-builders. If approved for the 2-year grant, HACC will provide service to Clallam County, with their first 20 homes constructed in Port Angeles.

"One of our proposed applicants is a single mother who is excited about the prospect of building a home and a neighborhood. With the diminished affordable housing stock, this may be the only way for these families to realize the dream of homeownership," said Melinda Szatlocky, Special Programs Manager for the Housing Authority.

If you would like more information on the HACC Mutual Self-Help program, please contact Christy at (360) 452-7631, Ext 22 or send an email to home@olypen.com. For additional information about USDA loan and grant programs, visit the Washington State USDA Rural Development Home Page at www.rurdev.usda.gov/wa. ###